

CENTRO DE LA COMUNIDAD  
NEW LONDON

Elizabeth Garcia Gonzalez  
Executive Director  
Centro de la Comunidad  
(860) 442-4463

To the Honorable Governor Rell and the members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Elizabeth García González, Executive Director of Centro de la Comunidad, New London, CT  
Centro de la Comunidad is a community based non profit agency serving individuals and families in New London County, promoting the successful involvement of Latinos in the community.

The mission of Centro de la Comunidad is to promote the empowerment of Hispanics and cultivate active participation by all members in our multicultural community.

New London County's population has increased in recent years due to local employment opportunities. A result has been newcomers living in New London and the surrounding areas in need of job readiness skills and bilingual assistance with basic needs in order for them to succeed in the community.

Centro de la Comunidad is the only human service agency in new London County that is focused solely on the well-being of the Hispanic community. We provide services that help to increase opportunities for Hispanic individuals to improve their education, working towards creating a stronger community by encouraging greater participation of all Hispanics. In 40 years Centro has helped thousands of individuals improve their education, find jobs, be involved in the community so that they in turn can contribute in helping others. The Hispanic population of New London County increased by 56% between 1990 and 2000, from 8,445 to 13,236 residents. Our clients are diverse and come from various countries including Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala. The services Centro de la Comunidad provides are G.E.D. in Spanish and ESOL, English as a second language classes. Many of our students continue to attend English classes even after obtaining employment.

Many employers would like to hire Hispanics to serve the growing Hispanic population of New London County, however there is a need for training that targets barriers such as English proficiency and communication skills.

Centro also serves job readiness programs such as CNA- Certified Nurse Aide. Currently we are trying to add new job readiness certified programs that will help our clients succeed in seeking various job opportunities that will benefit them to secure their future.

Centro de la Comunidad has offered social services to the Hispanic community and other newcomers since 1969. Centro is the only Hispanic organization serving the Hispanic community of Southeastern Connecticut.

Cultural sensitivity and outreach have been constant priorities for Centro. Centro's bilingual and bicultural staff is familiar with the surrounding community and its resources. Our services address the short term and long term needs of our clients who face a variety of challenges. The target population is socially and economically disadvantaged Latino families. The goals of the program is to ensure that Basic needs are met (food, shelter including housing assistance, clothing, medical and social services), Participants have access to special needs programs through referrals including mental health care, counseling services, immigration, legal assistance and a variety of special or basic needs that affect every individual.

Educational Services provides education program which provides services to the economically disadvantaged and undereducated. In addition the program provides advanced English and referrals to credential evaluation services for immigrants that are skilled professionals. The goals of this program are to increase educational levels and English language skills of recent immigrants to our community. ESOL/English for Speakers of other languages, Beginner and Intermediate levels, G.E.D. (General Education Diploma), Citizenship classes, Certified Nurse Aide (CNA), Spanish Classes, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced and Conversational. Job Readiness which includes Job search, Job counseling, resume and cover letter preparation, educational referrals, Reference Letters, Referrals to interview training and workshops, Fun and enjoyable activities and Entertainment are also offered along with Education, Health, Civics, Cultural programs, informational workshops, events & forums. Interpretation and translation services and Bilingual counseling, Computer Classes, Justice of the Peace and Notary service.

Centro de la Comunidad is partnered with TVCCA, CAUSA, New London Adult & Continuing Education, New London Board of Education, CT WORKS, Ledge Light Health District and Lawrence & Memorial Hospital.

We assist our clients, students and community members to overcome their barriers and help them succeed and improve their quality of life.

Please continue to advocate for Social Services, it's the humane thing to do for all individuals in our community.

Thank You,

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Garcia Gonzalez  
Executive Director  
Centro de la Comunidad  
(860) 442-4463  
(860) 941-7985

Reply Forward